

V.—*Are the Carrier Sociology and Mythology Indigenous or Exotic?*

(WITH A MAP.)

By The REV. FATHER A. G. MORICE, O.M.I.

(Presented by Dr. G. M. Dawson, May 31st, 1892.)

## LIST OF INDIAN (DÉNÉ) VILLAGES, REFERRING TO NUMBERS SHOWN UPON THE MAP.

|                |                  |                                |                             |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Na'kraztti  | 9. Hwo'tat       | 17. Teinlak (population exter- | 23. Pel'kateék              |
| 2. Pintco      | 10. Tsécah       | minated by the Chi-            | 24. ʔl'katco                |
| 3. Thatce      | 11. 'Méyahwotqet | koh'tin)                       | 25. Nakunt'lún              |
| 4. Yekutce     | 12. Tsej'kazqoh  | 18. 'ʔeít'i                    | 26. (I have forgotten name) |
| 5. 'Kaztee     | 13. Stélla       | 19. Nésietcah                  | 27. T'lothèñqah             |
| 6. Sést'sethùt | 14. Natle        | 20. Teontsithal'a (Quesnelle)  | 28. Tlèsqoh                 |
| 7. Lathakrozla | 15. Nu'kreh      | 21. Stélla (Carriers)          | 29. Stélla (Chi'koh'tin)    |
| 8. Nés'qóllək  | 16. Sai'koz      | 22. 'ʔus'koz                   | 30. Qéz oñlathùt            |

Though very few aboriginal words occur in the course of this paper, I give below the chief peculiarities of the Déné phonology such as rendered in the following pages :

The vowels are as in French, except *e*, *u*, as in Italian; *é* as the *e* in the French "mets"; *è* as *e* in English "ten"; *o* as the so-called French *e muet*; *au* as in German "hauss;" *ai* as the *i* of the English "file."

*N* is a nasal followed by a sonant *n*; *ʔ* is a lingual-sibilant of peculiar sound; *ɣ* and *κ* are very guttural; *ɣ* almost corresponds to *ty*, both letters being consonants; *ch* and *sh* as in English. The apostrophe (') accompanying certain letters adds to their original value the peculiar exploding sound common to most Indian languages.

The names of non-Déné tribes on the map and through the paper are according to Dr. Boas's orthography.

## INTRODUCTORY.

In the first place, who are the Carriers? Unless I am greatly mistaken, a respectable majority of the intelligent reading public, and even not a few professional Americanists, would not be the worse for some light being thrown on this subject before an attempt is made to answer the question heading this paper. For, strange as it may seem, while all of their heterogeneous neighbours have served as the theme of many a learned dissertation by Canadian and American ethnologists, the Carriers, and in general the whole aboriginal stock to which they belong, had before the publication of the present writer's monographs on their sociology and philology hardly been honoured by aught else than brief passing references which, I am bound to say, evidenced as a rule more ignorance of, than familiarity with, the subject. The conscientious reports of Dr. Franz Boas published in 1889 and 1890 under the auspices of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, while minutely describing all that is worth knowing concerning every Indian tribe having its habitat in British Columbia, do not contain any more lengthened mention of our Carriers than this brief remark, which implicitly refers to them: "The author's

researches do not include the Tinnéh tribes, some of which are comparatively well known."<sup>1</sup> This "comparatively," the learned Doctor will pardon me for remarking, is certainly not out of place here. "Well known," I am tempted to retort, are "some" of the tribes whose social condition and philological peculiarities he has taken so great pains to faithfully expose, such as are, for instance, the Kwakwintl, through the efforts of Dr. G. M. Dawson;<sup>2</sup> the Haida, through the same author's "Notes on the Haida,"<sup>3</sup> and, I might almost say, all of the North-Western Coast Indians, through the writings of such Americanists as G. M. Sproat,<sup>4</sup> J. Deans,<sup>5</sup> J. G. Swan,<sup>6</sup> F. Poole,<sup>7</sup> H. H. Bancroft,<sup>8</sup> O. T. Mason,<sup>9</sup> and a host of others, not mentioning the early explorers Geo. Vancouver,<sup>10</sup> G. Dixon,<sup>11</sup> Urey Lisiansky,<sup>12</sup> etc. I would especially cite the lately published monograph<sup>13</sup> of U. S. N. Ensign Albert P. Niblack, who, except in so far as philology and folk-lore are concerned, may be said to have almost exhausted the subject. Our Carriers' sociology has lost much in not being presented to the scientific world by such painstaking writers, though I cannot but fancy that, to more easily comprehend and faithfully describe a people's social system, one should previously be conversant with its language, an accomplishment of which few, if any, of the above-mentioned authors could boast.

To the best of my knowledge, the only attempt made to give any idea of the Carriers' institutions was the writer's paper, published in the 'Proceedings of the Canadian Institute,' under the title: "The Western Dénés; Their Manners and Customs."<sup>14</sup> Although I do not flatter myself with having thereby made them fully known to the readers of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, I feel that I cannot repeat here what I then said in a somewhat lengthy essay. Therefore, I shall content myself with merely condensing what information may be necessary to the full understanding of the remarks I shall offer as an attempted answer to the initial question: "Are the Carrier Sociology and Mythology Indigenous or Exotic?"

#### ETHNOLOGICAL

The Carriers constitute one of the western tribes of the great American family of aborigines commonly called by ethnographers Tinnéh, Tinne, or Athapaskan, appellations which I have shown elsewhere<sup>15</sup> to be inappropriate, and which, in my estimation, would

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Report of the Committee, etc., p. 6, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Notes and Observations on the Kwakwintl People of Vancouver Island. Montreal, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Ann. Rep. Geol. Surv. Canada, 1878-79.

<sup>4</sup> Scenes and Studies of Savage Life. London, 1868.

<sup>5</sup> Articles in the *Victoria Colonist* and other publications.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Queen Charlotte Islands. London, 1872.

<sup>8</sup> Native Races, vol. i. Wild Tribes. San Francisco, 1883.

<sup>9</sup> Various papers in the Smithsonian publications.

<sup>10</sup> A Voyage of Discovery, etc. 3 vols. London, 1798.

<sup>11</sup> A Voyage Round the World. London, 1789.

<sup>12</sup> A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1803-06. London, 1814.

<sup>13</sup> The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia, in Annual Report, etc.—Report of the U. S. National Museum. Washington, 1890.

<sup>14</sup> Proc. Can. Inst., October, 1889. Toronto.

<sup>15</sup> The Western Dénés, etc., p. 109, note 2. It might be rejoined that ethnologists have merely adopted, as a common denomination for the whole stock, the verbal suffix noticeable in the names of many tribes or tribal subdivisions, just as it is practised by some with regard to the Nootka, or (according to them) Aht nation. In which

be advantageously replaced by the name they give themselves, "Déné," in the dialect of the largest and most central of the tribes into which this family is divided.

The Carriers, as a separate tribe, are generally called Tacully, or Takulli by outsiders, on what grounds I never could find out. Among themselves they are to-day known as Takheṭne (singular, Takheṭ), a word perfectly meaningless, at least in their own language, to which it is exotic. From their eastern neighbours (the Tsé'kénne) they receive the name of Areṭne (singular, Areṭ), or "Carriers," though the custom which gave rise to this appellation, that in deference to which widows "carried" or packed a few charred bones of their deceased husbands, has long been abolished.

As will be seen by a glance at the map accompanying this paper, except on their western frontier, the Carriers proper are surrounded by congenious tribes, namely: the Chiṭkoh'tin in the south, the Tsé'kénne in the east, and the Tsé'kénne and Nah'ane in the north. But, as to all practical purposes, the Chiṭkoh'tin—and, indeed, the western Nah'ane as well—have the same general characteristics and, in the main, possess similar social institutions as the Carriers, it may truly be said that the latter's neighbours are: In the south, the Salish, Sequapmuḡ or Shushwap, and Slatlumuḡ, or Lillooet; the Kawichin in the south-west.

In the west from south to north, the Kwakwintl, the Bilqula (a Salish race), the Kwakwintl again, and the Tsimshian.

In the south-east they also border on the Nehiyawok, or Crees, through a portion of their frontier. But, owing to the natural barrier opposed to frequent intercourse in the shape of the Rocky Mountains, they never had much contact with them.<sup>1</sup>

So that the Carriers may be said to be environed by no less than four very distinct races, each of which is subdivided into several different tribes possessing ethnic and linguistic characteristics of their own. This fact should be borne in mind by the reader who wishes to easily understand the bearing of the remarks I shall submit to him after I have given some idea of the Carriers' social institutions.

### SOCIOLOGICAL.

With the exception of that custom to which they owe their name, the Carriers' sociology was substantially that obtaining amongst the nearest heterogeneous races with which they had social or commercial intercourse. And, remember, that here I associate with the Carriers their kindred in blood and language, the Chiṭkoh'tin, who, as has already been said, are also sociologically related to them, though, as will be seen, their particular environment caused them to differ in some points.

They were divided in two very distinct social classes: the hereditary nobles, or

---

case I would beg to say: Then, by all means, write the word as it ought to be; for, in all the Déné dialects, there is as much difference between the sense of *Tinne* and *'tinne* as there is between that of *night* and *day*. Moreover, this suffix varies more according to the tribe than the word for "man (*Déut*, etc.,)" for which reason I think the latter should be preferred. Everybody calls the Tlingit after the word they use for "man." Why not do the same with regard to the Dénés?

<sup>1</sup> Yet the Carriers owe to their intercourse with Cree-speaking people—more probably half-breeds in the H. B. Co.'s employ—the words *kokus* (swine); *mōtus* (cattle); *sāwīya* (money and silver), and *sāwānpāt* (Cree *sanānpān*) ribbon.

notables, who possessed the land and enjoyed many jealously-guarded privileges, and the common people who had no voice in the councils of the nation and acted as serfs to the notables, with whom, and for whom, they hunted.

The titles of these American noblemen descended among the Carriers from uncle to nephew by a sister, and not from father to son, as with them matriarchate or mother-right, and not patriarchy, prevailed.

The rank of such personages was obtained and sustained through that famous institution familiar to the Indians of the whole North Pacific coast, the "potlach," or public distribution of victuals and goods, which was made by the aspirant or received notable, with the help, generally, of all the members of his particular clan.

For, as among the maritime Indians, the Carriers were also divided into several clans or gentes, which originated, in their estimation, a relationship closer and more binding than that resulting from blood parentage. Each gens had one or more totems which were held in high veneration, as was more particularly noticeable on festive occasions. In case of extended travelling—which, however, was of rather rare occurrence—the totem served also as an emblem guaranteeing to the bearer a brotherly reception and constant protection by any member of the same clan he might fall in with.

The kinship resulting from fellow-clanship was reputed to be so strict that it precluded the possibility of co-clansmen intermarrying, while, on the other hand, marriage between even first cousins, if on the mother's side, was quite common, and, in some cases, almost obligatory. By an immemorial custom, the widow of a Carrier was also inevitably transferred as wife to the deceased's surviving brother.

If we now pass from the general organization of the tribe to the constitution of the family, we see the wife working as a slave, without exercising any authority (unless, by exception, she were a notable), and the husband domineering as her lord and master and having in hands the full administration of the family affairs.

Polygamy flourished here as on the coast, and marriage, though somewhat difficult of attainment for the young man, was never considered as indissoluble.

Young girls, when they reached the age of puberty, had to undergo a very trying ordeal of sequestration accompanied by various bodily mortifications and penitential privations, which were the exact counterpart of those noted by all the authors who have treated of the maritime aborigines. Among other peculiarities, the pubescent girl had to wear a bonnet and veil of a particular pattern, protecting the passers-by from the malign influences which were supposed to emanate from her while she was menstruating. She could not scratch or even touch her head or hair with her fingers, but wore for that purpose a diminutive bone comb, and would also never drink but through a swan bone tube or "chalumeau."

Once she was married, the same sequestration and many of its concomitant observances were repeated on the occasion of every child-bearing and each recurring menstruation.

The death of a member of the tribe, especially of a nobleman, was seized upon as a pretext for interminable lamentations on the one side and ostentatious feasting and banquetting on the other. The remains having been cremated in the presence, if possible, of a large concourse of people, the few remaining charred bones were handed to the widow, to be continually carried in a small package for a term of one, two or

more years, according to the dignity of the deceased and the ability of his surviving fellow-clansmen to gather a sufficient amount of eatables and dressed skins to be distributed in a final potlach. Upon this occasion the deceased's bones were ultimately deposited in a mortuary post or column close by the village.

This was the signal of the widow's liberation from the very exacting bondage she had suffered at the hands of her late husband's relatives, her hair having been clipped by them to the skin and her face disfigured by gum or dirt as a token of her degraded condition.

If we now examine those aborigines' beliefs and their notions with regard to the creation, we find that they are practically identical with those of their immediate or mediate western neighbours; their myths and legends, and a like similarity is observed.

Well may we ask ourselves: Since these Indians are ethnologically, philologically and psychologically so different from those neighbouring races, the Tsimshian, Salish, etc., how did it come to pass that both maritime and inland aborigines possess so strikingly similar social institutions, such identical superstitions and folk-lore? Being of such confessedly unrelated stock, one race must, of necessity, have borrowed from the other. Who, then, were the borrowers? Who the originals?

Thinking scientists who examined and admired the very elaborate social system and customs obtaining among the Coast Indians have naturally tried to investigate the source from which they must have originated. Some fancy to see it in the primitive Aztec civilization; others think they have found it in the inhabitants, ancient and modern, of the Japanese isles. As far as I know, the only authors who ever ventured a comparison between coast and inland sociologies are Drs. G. M. Dawson and Franz Boas. It is somewhat remarkable that both should seem to have reached an identical conclusion, which may be resumed in two words: The coast and south races have copied, at least partially, from the inland northern aborigines. Under date March 3, 1891, the first-named wrote to the author:

"In your letter of June last I see that you refer to the probability of the Tinneh having borrowed mythology and customs from the coast. Is it not probable that borrowing has been on both sides? The similarity of the Tinneh creation myth to that of the Haida—of *Us-tas* to *Ni-kil-stlas*—induced me to think that the Haida had it from inland, and this seems to be borne out by the fact that Dr. Boas has lately found practically the same story among the Bilhoola, probably independently obtained by them from adjacent Tinneh peoples."

On the other hand, Dr. Boas has the following to say in a note appended to his report on the Shushwap:

"The mourning ceremonies of the Shushwap are evidently influenced by those of their northern neighbours, the Carriers, which have been described by the Rev. A. G. Morice in the 'Proceedings of the Canadian Institute,' 1889. The strictness of the levirate and the ceremonies celebrated at the grave are almost the same in both cases."<sup>1</sup>

More recently, Sir Daniel Wilson, after noting the commercial relations which existed from time immemorial between the coast and the inland aborigines, adds in his introduction to the Seventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada:

<sup>1</sup> Sixth Report on the N.W. Tribes of Canada. P. 91.

Sec. II., 1892. 15.

"As a result of this inter-communication between the Bilqula and Tinneh it is found that houses essentially similar to those of the Coast Indians in mode of construction and ornamentation, though smaller and less skilfully built, occur far inland on the upper waters of the Salmon and Blackwater Rivers ; while, on the other hand, the practical identity of some points in the mythology of the Bilqula with that of the Tinneh of the interior is a clear instance of reciprocal influence."<sup>1</sup>

Now, I may appear presumptuous, but my inmost convictions bid me beg leave to totally dissent from the conclusions, expressed and implied, of these learned writers, and unhesitatingly assert that all such customs and beliefs as are not purely aboriginal or general among all races of Indians, but are common to both coast and inland stocks, have been borrowed by the Carriers, and that consequently the latter's sociology is extraneous.<sup>2</sup> Had Drs. Dawson and Boas been favoured with my opportunities for studying the question, I have no doubt whatever that there could not have been two opinions on the subject. To me, to ask whether our Indians lent their customs to the maritime aborigines is almost paramount to inquiring whether Europeans have learnt from the Mikado's court to wear close-fitting uniforms or tight-lacing corsets ; yet, as nobody's word ought to be taken for a proof of what he advances, I shall presently produce my reasons for setting forth such an uncompromising opinion.

#### CARRIER SOCIOLOGY EXOTIC—GENERAL ARGUMENTS.

Let me observe at the outset that on the peculiar character of the Carriers and Chiikoh'tin depends the strength of much of the evidence which I am going to adduce in corroboration of my argument. I would, therefore, impress upon the reader the absolute necessity of penetrating himself with the nature of these aborigines' main characteristic, viz., their wonderful receptiveness whereby they instinctively adopt the practices and beliefs of such peoples as may appear superior to themselves. In spite of their shortcomings and of the weaknesses which they share with the rest of mankind, their motto is, and seems to have ever been, *Sursum !* Upwards !

Nothing could be construed as a better proof of this than their behaviour since the advent of the whites amongst them. While many aboriginal tribes have to this day remained refractory to all idea of exchanging the customs they inherited from their forefathers for those of the pale-faced strangers, despite the confessed superiority of the latter, our Carriers had no sooner obtained a glimpse of the adventurers hailing from a distant land, than they immediately set upon imitating them. Their skin clothing was discarded for the new fabrics offered in return for their peltries ; their hair was cut short as soon as this became the fashion among the foreigners ; tattooing began to be avoided because it was not noticed among them ; native utensils and implements were soon contemptuously thrown away and replaced by those of imported patterns ; regular log-houses, such as they saw in the North-West Company's forts, were substituted for their primitive pole lodges, etc. They could not help perceiving that each of the North-West Company's posts was governed by a single officer, who alone was recognized as the ruler of the

<sup>1</sup> Seventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada. Brit. Assn. for Adv. Sci., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This rule, of course, does not extend to details or minor observances, which often considerably differ even in several tribes of the same maritime stock.



whole establishment ; so every village asked for and obtained from that personage what is now called a chief. As that trading company's officers and, no doubt, some of their employees as well, wore finger-rings, the Carriers thought to raise themselves in the social scale by making for themselves and wearing such previously unknown ornaments ; and as copper was rather rare amongst them, they substituted therefor boiled caribou horn, which circumstance accounts for the fact that a ring of such material was lately found here.<sup>1</sup>

If potlaching and old-fashioned dancing did not at once fall into desuetude, it was because both were countenanced by the North-West Company and, later on, the Hudson Bay Company people, who, the better to keep the natives under subjection, gave themselves every year a kind of tobacco potlach, in connection wherewith the traditional differences of rank among the receivers were scrupulously observed, and more than once found a welcome recreation in attending the dances and other amusements of the Indians. So that our Carriers were perfectly justifiable if they supposed that both potlach and dance were as much in honour in the country of the whites as the peculiar rank privileges which the latter unconsciously helped to perpetuate.

As the foreign traders had only one wife, the natives, who seemed to have but one ambition—that of raising themselves to the standard of their social superiors—abandoned polygamy even before any minister of religion had set foot among them. So they acted with regard to the cremation of the dead, which, to imitate the whites, they replaced by interment, and that so soon and so spontaneously that I doubt whether there now lives among them an eye-witness of the traditional ceremony.

With the arrival of the missionaries, what remained of their old customs gradually gave way : ceremonial paraphernalia were burnt ; sequestration of women was stopped ; in most cases landed estates were parcelled out to heads of families, and, in general, such practices as were distinctively aboriginal and unconnected with, or resulting from, human frailty, disappeared as if by enchantment. To-day it is considered insulting among the Carriers to be called an Indian, and, in their estimation, a person of Caucasian descent is no more a white man than the redskin who conforms to European social notions. Their innate power of imitation and propensity for self-betterment have also led them into appreciating the value of literary knowledge. They now read and write their own language, and even support a monthly periodical of their own.

As regards their present material condition, this much can be said : that, as a rule, their houses are just as well built, and often quite as comfortable, as those of any white man who ever ventured in their country. They possess horses and cattle, which they keep in stables and feed at the cost of much personal exertion during their long winters. Close by their habitations some of them have regular carpenter shops, wherein they turn out such difficult work as window-sashes, fancy boxes, etc., while in every village a number boast the possession of sleighs, cutters, pack-saddles (and, among the Chikoh'tin, riding-saddles) of their own manufacture. They dress well, insist upon getting such garments, household utensils and working tools as are the most in vogue among white men ; and, in a few cases, it is even amusing to see some of them attired in their best clothes parading the village street, cane in hand, as a dandy would in some fashionable resort.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stuart's Lake, where the author is stationed.

If we now turn our attention to the Carriers' heterogeneous neighbours in the west, we are not slow in discovering that, to this very day, in almost all sociological particulars, they have remained what they were one hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup> Despite reiterated prohibitions and even threats<sup>2</sup> by the civil authorities, potlaching is going on every year with renewed vigour;<sup>3</sup> old-fashion dancing is the order of the day every successive winter; the erecting of commemorative or heraldic columns is continued; in many places the solitary blanket without trousers or shirt is, as of old, the only garment worn by the men when at home; most of the traditional myths and legends are narrated by the fireside to credulous audiences; the division of the tribe into noble and common people is religiously preserved, not one of the traditional privileges of the former being overlooked; the manufacture and use of the ceremonial paraphernalia, masks, rattles, head-dresses, etc., goes on just as if no superior civilization had ever presented its claims to their consideration, and I know even of dead bodies which have been burnt within the last few years by aborigines of Tsimshian parentage!<sup>4</sup> And note that most of these Indians have seen modern civilization in all its glory through their periodical trips to Victoria, New Westminster and Puget Sound, while our Carriers, as a rule, never see more of it than what is offered in the Hudson's Bay Company's forts.

When, some twenty years ago, our missionaries visited the latter with the results above recited, they pushed their way into the Kitikson's (a Tsimshian tribe) country.<sup>5</sup> But when these Indians learnt that to become Christians they would have to sacrifice all their superstitious beliefs and observances, they turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the preacher, who returned without having made a single proselyte. For fully seven years our missionaries likewise resided and arduously laboured among the Kwakwiutl, but absolutely to no purpose, so that they had to leave them to their fate. To-day all the Carriers and Chipkoh'tin are Roman Catholic, while there is not a single adherent to that faith among the Kitikson, Tsimshian, Haida, Bilqula and Kwakwiutl.

Now I would ask: "Between such receptive and progressive Indians on the one hand, and such exclusive and conservative tribes on the other, who are likely to have borrowed the other's sociology?" Evidently to propose the question is to answer it.

Furthermore, we should not forget that the Carriers are but a small fraction of a great nation divided into at least a score of tribes, some of which are several times more

<sup>1</sup> It will seem to many that a reservation should be made in favour of some Tsimshian tribes, especially those gathered at Metlakatlah by Mr. Duncan, a majority of whom migrated a few years since to an Alaskan island. But even these have retained most of their aboriginal social institutions, as is confessed by Dr. Boas through this remark: "They have given up all their old customs, *except those referring to their social organization*," (5th Report, page 11.) Moreover, the Tsimshian tribes, whom I claim to have the most influenced Carrier sociology, are not the coast, but the inland tribes, who still adhere to all their original customs.

<sup>2</sup> An act was passed against potlaching, with penalties attached to its infraction.

<sup>3</sup> A Coast chief or noble, who wanted to outdo his predecessors, lately made so bold as to send to Queen Victoria the sum of \$200 as her share of the goods and money distributed.

<sup>4</sup> These lines were written when I happened to read in the *Victoria Colonist* (October 9, 1891), that a party of Haidas—and, a few days after, another of Tsimshians—amused the inhabitants of that town by theatrical representations illustrating the most notable among their own native observances, such as dances, medicine men, conjuring, etc., a feat which would now be utterly impossible to any number of Carriers.

<sup>5</sup> The name of that tribe is spelt Gyiksa'n by Dr. F. Boas. I write it as it is pronounced by the whites and our Indians, without any pretension at improving on the Doctor's orthography, which I have no doubt must be the correct one.



populous, surrounded by congenious peoples, and, therefore, more likely to keep aloof from foreign practices. If we look into the social system of those large tribes untouched by alien influences, what do we see? I do not hesitate a moment to affirm that all such institutions as are common to the Carriers and Coast Indians, by contradistinction from those upheld among all Indians as American aborigines, are absolutely unknown in the main body of the Déné nation. Through the works of Rev. E. Petitot and the letters of missionaries stationed among the Eastern Dénés, as well as through personal observation among the Sékanais (or Tse'kenne), who, sociologically speaking, are Eastern Dénés, I have come to the conclusion that their social system differs as much from that of our Carriers and Chikoh'tin as European differs from Chinese civilization.

In all the tribes of the Déné nation which have had no intercourse with Coast Indians, patriarchy takes the place of the matriarchy obtaining here, and the clans, with their totems<sup>1</sup> and the social peculiarities derived therefrom are unknown. So are the tribes' division into noble and common people, the right of the former, or any, to particular hunting grounds, the potlaches or distribution feasts, as observed here,<sup>2</sup> the burning of the dead, the protracted and systematic wooing of the young man before winning over his intended wife's parents, etc.

In view of these facts, is it probable, I would ask again, that a comparatively small tribe, characterized by a remarkable receptiveness and power of self-appropriation, would have originated a very elaborate social system totally unknown to the great mass of the nation to which it belongs, while to this day that same system is tenaciously clung to by alien peoples coterminous with it, and with it was formerly, in a commercial point of view, in the relations of vassal to suzerain? I am very much mistaken if there can be two answers to that question. Yet, as some may not feel satisfied with arguments of such general nature, I shall now enter, as it were, into the kernel of the subject, and endeavour to confirm my thesis by more detailed remarks, and by pointing out the originators, or, at least unconscious propagators, of the most prominent customs and institutions formerly in vogue among the Carriers and Chikoh'tin.

#### CARRIER SOCIOLOGY EXOTIC—PROVED BY FACTS.

First, as to the tribal division into noble and common people. Beyond the possibility of a doubt, it owes its existence to the intercourse of the Carriers with the Tsimshian tribes, especially the Kitikson.

Before I proceed further, I must be permitted a remark which I deem necessary in this connection. When, speaking of our aborigines, I call their headmen nobles or notables, I should not be understood as referring to any social class different from that whose

<sup>1</sup> Petitot (*Monographie des Déné-Dindjé*, p. xxiii) speaks of the totems as being familiar to the Eastern Dénés; but these are *personal*, not *gentil*, totems, and everybody knows that there is a very wide difference between the two. Personal totems are revealed in dreams to individuals, and as such were also known here independently of gentile totems, with which they have nothing—save the name—in common.

<sup>2</sup> I am well aware that among the Eastern and intermediate Dénés it is not a rare occurrence to see successful hunters share with others the fruit of their expedition, which would otherwise soon get spoiled. But here, again, I need not remark that such patriarchal repasts totally differ from the ceremonial banquets formerly in vogue west of the Rockies. Cf. "The Western Dénés," p. 147 et seq.

representatives writers on Coast Indians usually call "chiefs." To eastern ears these two words cannot fail to evoke ideas suggestive of dissimilar dignities: and my reason for avoiding the latter is that it is misleading to most people unacquainted with western aboriginal sociology. Previous to the Carriers' contact with white men, a chief as the first officer, the leader of a place, never had an existence here, and those investigators who are conversant with the languages and habits of the maritime Indians will bear me out in my assumption that, there as here, genuine chiefs were but recently unknown, and, in many places, have remained so to this very day.<sup>1</sup> It sometimes happens, indeed, that one notable will obtain more influence and become more prominent than his colleagues; but, as I have said elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> he was never but *prior inter pares*.

To come now to the origin of the notables as a social class. I find my best evidence of the derivation of that institution from Tsimshian sociology in the very ceremonies which accompanied the creation of such a dignitary. On that occasion, when attendant young men had extended in a line the dressed skins they were going to distribute, one of them would exclaim, addressing the assembly: "These he will give away as a fee for his enthronization," upon which the whole crowd would break forth in loud acclamations: "*Samáqét! samáqét!*" Now, what does that word mean? Ask a dozen or more Carriers, and probably they will be unable to satisfy you. And no wonder, for that word is exotic to their language, since it is nothing else than the *Samáyít* of the Tsimshians noted by Dr. Boas as being used by those Indians when they address the sun. It means "wealthy" or "chief through wealth." This borrowing of a foreign word would seem as if it were intended to emphasize the extraneousness of the custom itself and quite unnecessary for any other purpose, since the Carriers possess themselves a term (*mutih*) identical in meaning.

After the new notable had made his grand distribution of skins he would give an immense repast to the crowd in trough-like carved vessels which were called *'tsak*, a word which evidently had not a different origin from that of *'tsékh*, used by the Kitikson, to designate a like vessel. It may also be noted that those utensils were in many cases either imported or incrustated with haliotis shells brought from the sea-coast.

Then, to honour the new nobleman and signify his accepted accession to his predecessor's rank and title, the latter's hereditary song was taken up and repeatedly executed by the assembly. Now, again, what was that song? Merely a Tsimshian air with badly pronounced Tsimshian words!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Boas (Fifth Report, p. 34), though not plainly asserting it, seems, however, to be aware of this peculiarity when he says: "The last [*i.e.* the chiefs] form a group by themselves, the members of the class forming the highest nobility." Horatio Hale is more explicit in his prefatory notes on the Doctor's Sixth Report: "As Dr. Boas informs us, there are in all the tribes three distinct ranks—the chiefs, the middle class and the common people—or, as they might perhaps be more aptly styled, nobles, burgesses and rabble. The nobles form a caste. Their rank is hereditary." (Sixth Rep., p. 4.) A. P. Niblack seems to recognize the existence (in modern times at least) of a local chief with several petty chiefs. ("The Ind. of the West Coast," etc., p. 250 et seq.) But what he says of the rivalries between chiefs of the same place leads me to infer that, even among the Tlingit, of whom he treats at greatest length, there was no real "chief" in our sense of the word.

As for the middle class of Dr. Boas, so far as I am aware, it was here in an embryotic state, and, had it not been for the advent of European civilization, it might have grown to as prominent a position in the Carrier sociology as it enjoyed in that of most of the Coast tribes.

<sup>2</sup> "The West. Dénés," p. 144, Proc. Can. Inst., Oct., 1889.

<sup>3</sup> Upon the information of several Indians who knew no better, I stated three years ago ("The West. Dénés," p.

And bear in mind, that neither nobles, nor consequently potlaches, *'sak* or traditional chants are known to the main body of the Déné nation. Yet it may not be amiss to mention here as an additional illustration of that race's remarkable power of assimilation that, some years ago, even the Tse'k'enne tried to adopt the potlach and its concomitants, but were obliged to desist, owing to the precarious life they lead, having constantly to roam over forests and mountains in search of food, as there is no salmon stream in their country. This abortive attempt was witnessed by my informant, an old and intelligent Tse'k'enne who died last year, and I quote it as corroborating by suggestion the thesis I am endeavouring to establish. It should not be forgotten also that such Nah'ane as have no intercourse with the Tlingit tribes have remained in all sociological particulars pure, unsophisticated Dénés, while those subdivisions of the tribe which inhabit the Stickeen River and immediate tributaries have assimilated the social institutions of the alien races wherewith they are in contact.

To return to the question of the noblemen and their origin: As a personal emblem of their rank, they wear among the Tsimshian tribes ear-rings of a particular shape. Identical ornaments are to this day worn by Hwotso'tin and Babine<sup>1</sup> notables, but their use had not penetrated into the other septa of the Carriers when the arrival of the missionaries prevented any further development of that custom. Everybody will see that if such a practice had been introduced from inland, the geographical circumscription within which it was prevailing would be to-day in an inverse direction.

This last remark holds good also with regard to the commemorative columns so well known through all the writers on the North-West coast. The Hwotso'tin, who pass part of the year in almost daily contact with the Kitikson, had already adopted them, as may be seen from the ruins of their old village; but they had remained practically unknown further inland. Yet—and this is another evidence of the extraneous origin of that social class—even amongst the Carriers proper, notables were often called "*khéyan hwo-tachon*" that is, "stick, or post, of the village"—which circumstance would seem to indicate that the Tsimshian practice of erecting such monuments had already been noticed by the islanders, who were, perhaps, unconsciously drifting towards its adoption, when they were dissuaded from going further in their assimilating process by the apparition of a new and more perfect civilization.

As a rule, it should be said that such customs as were borrowed by the Carriers had their complete expansion among the originators. Several details, it would seem, had not had time to reach the interior of the country, or, for some other reason, had not as yet been accepted. Thus, for instance, on the occasion of potlaches, destruction or burning of goods was not practised by the Carriers, nor even by the Hwotso'tin and the Babines; but the women of the two latter sub-tribes had already conformed to the custom of wearing labrets, which is so prevalent all along the North Pacific coast, though it never obtained among the Carriers proper. So far as I am aware, the phratries were still unknown among them; the traditional origin of the *gontes* received no definite explanation, and the secret societies common to most maritime tribes had hardly passed beyond their first or

155) that the words of those songs were claimed to be remnants of the Carriers' original language, which circumstance shows that relying upon the words of Indians, even when you cannot misunderstand them, will not always ensure to you exemption from errors.

<sup>1</sup> The Hwotso'tin subtribe of the Carriers immediately border on the Kitikson, and the Babines come next.

embryotic stage of existence when the Carriers commenced looking to others than Coast Indians for models to copy from.

I have hinted at frequent intercourse between the inland and coast aborigines, and tried to expose some of its results. It may be well to explain its *raison d'être*. As has been pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the Carriers of the old stock, though great imitators, were but poor workmen. So they periodically repaired in large numbers to the principal village of the Hwotso'tin—*Tséchah*—where they met important parties of natives who had come up all the way from the sea-coast, Tsimshian, Haida, occasionally Tlingit, desirous of trading with the inland tribes. Stone axes and other implements, dentalium and halotis shells, copper ore and ornaments, wooden boxes made of cedar slabs, carved ceremonial paraphernalia, oulachon oil, etc., were generally the objects brought in by the maritime Indians and bartered away for the Carriers' dressed skins, fur blankets and pelts generally. Naturally, feasting, parading, speechifying and story-telling were inseparable from such large gatherings, and thus our Indians could not help witnessing, and afterwards trying to imitate, the practices of people who boasted of such skill and brought them such useful and precious goods. The legends narrated to them were, of course, reported with no lack of embellishments when back in their forest homes, and the source of such stories was soon forgotten. I never saw any such fairs, but my predecessor here witnessed one where fully two thousand Indians had congregated.

Passing from the general organization of the Carriers, we come to the style of their habitations, the constitution of their families and their mortuary practices. I think no better points could be chosen as illustrative of their wonderful power of observation and propensity for assimilation.

The Dénés, as a distinct nation, when socially unchanged by foreign influences, had, as may still be observed among some of their tribes, for habitations huts of coniferous branches, or, more generally, frame tents, or lodges covered with moose or caribou skins. Let us hear on this subject the Rev. E. Petitot, who for twenty years laboured and extensively travelled among almost all the eastern tribes :

"Peuple nomade de chasseurs, de trappeurs et de pêcheurs, les Déné-Dindjié habitent sous des tentes de peaux d'élan ou de renne, garnies de poil ou sans poil, coniques ou demi-sphériques. \* \* \* Ces loges ou *boucanières* circulaires reposent sur des perches réunies en faisceau ou sur des cerceaux plantés en terre. Une ouverture ménagée au sommet laisse échapper la fumée d'un feu qu'on y entretient sans cesse. Certaines tribus plus apathiques ou plus endurcies à la rigueur du climat se contentent de cahutes en branches de sapin décorées pompeusement du titre de maisons proprement dites."<sup>2</sup>

Now, I suppose that every American sociologist is familiar with the large wooden lodges, with pole or log walls, gable and roof, accommodating several families common to the Tsimshian and Tlingit races. These he will find likewise among the Carriers and such Nah'ane as have come into immediate contact with the Tlingit, while the Chikoh'tin adopted the "Kekule houses," *ajizkhan*, or semi-subterranean huts, described by Dr. Boas and others,<sup>3</sup> as the distinctive style of dwellings of the Shushwap, the Chikoh'tin's

<sup>1</sup> The Western Dénés, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Monographie des Déné-Dindjié (prefixed to that author's polyglot dictionary), p. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, p. 80 et seq.

eastern neighbours. The sweat-houses (*tsé-zat*) of the latter were also of exactly Shushwap pattern.

As regards succession to rank and property, the heterogeneous neighbours of the Chikoh'tin, the Bilqula, the Kwakwintl and the Southern Salish tribes are governed by father right. Now, it so happens that the present head chief of the Chikoh'tin, Anarèm, is the immediate successor in the chieftainship of his father, who was also called Anarèm. This would be utterly impossible among the Carriers, who have borrowed from the Tsimshian the matriarchate, which is unknown to the bulk of the Déné nation, to which they belong.

I trust that the most exacting sceptic may now confess that the Dénés are indeed a borrowing nation.

And yet this is not all. Let us now investigate their national mode of disposing of their dead, and compare it with that obtaining among the Carriers and the Chikoh'tin. Among the eastern and intermediate tribes (such as the Tsé'kènné and the Rocky Mountains Nah'ane) it consisted simply—especially if travelling—in pulling down the brush hut on the remains and proceeding on their journey, or if stationed at any place, or even while travelling, if impelled by special consideration for the deceased, by erecting for the remains a rough scaffolding, wherein they were incased as in a kind of primitive coffin constructed of slender poles or the limbs of trees. Then, as a rule, the birch-bark canoe of the dead person was left upside down by way of cover to this aerial grave. Let us hear Petitot on this point:

" Dans les tribus Déné-Dindjié qui ont conservé l'usage antique et général aux Peaux-Rouges, les morts sont déposés *en cache* dans un coffre très grossier et à claire-voie, fait de petits troncs d'arbre encochés et élevé de trois à sept pieds au-dessus du sol. Les vêtements, les armes et les ustensiles du défunt sont ensevelis avec lui ou bien lancés au gré du courant. Tous les objets ayant appartenu au défunt et qui ne peuvent être cachés avec lui sont sacrifiés. On les brûle, on les jette à l'eau, ou bien on les suspend dans les arbres."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes—as among the Tsé'kènné, and even some eastern tribes, as appears from the same author's letters—<sup>2</sup> the corpse was also hidden, in a standing position, in a tree hollowed out for the purpose. In no case was it ever cremated. Now, what do we see among the Carriers and Chikoh'tin? When the former came in contact with the Tsimshian races they could not fail to notice that cremation was practised by them, and at the time of the discovery of their country all the subdivisions of their tribe burnt their dead and erected for the few remaining bones mortuary columns identical with those in vogue among the Tsimshian. On the other hand, the Chikoh'tin, who are coterminous with the Shushwap, who bury their dead, at once adopted interment as the final disposal of them.

To come to the object of Dr. Boas's note quoted in a previous paragraph: The Tsimshian races may have remotely influenced, through the Carriers, the mourning customs of the Shushwap; but I think it highly improbable, on account of the little intercourse the main body of these tribes had together, as will be easily explained by a glance at the

<sup>1</sup> Monographie des Déné-Dindjié, p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> In *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Paris, *passim*. That custom—though remembered even here—nevertheless appears to have obtained more especially in ancient times.

map prefixed to this paper. I would rather be inclined to believe that, even in this respect, our Carriers have shown their faculty of self-appropriation, as may be inferred from the following little incident of recent occurrence :

In his report on the Shushwap Dr. Boas says<sup>1</sup> that " wherever they find human bones they clean them and bury them ; " and, a little further on, he speaks of the " report that the bones of the dead were washed regularly " by the Shushwap. Now, four years ago, the writer had the misfortune of losing one of his boatmen, who was of good social standing in his own tribe. He was drowned while attempting to " jump " the Fort George rapid, and his remains could not be found until some months ago, when a Fort George Indian discovered them lying on the beach of the Fraser River. Next to identifying the remains, his first move was to *carefully wash them*.<sup>2</sup>

Might I not ask here : From whom did this young man learn to treat thus the bones of his fellow-villager ? Certainly not from his ancestors, who practised cremation and left no bones to be washed after the funeral ceremony was over. Not from his congenious neighbours, the Tsékénne, who, as Petitot very appropriately remarks, " éprouvent la plus grande répugnance à manipuler les cadavres ou les ossements des morts. " <sup>3</sup> Nor from the few whites with whom he had occasional intercourse, since that custom is equally foreign to them. He—and indeed all the southern Carriers dwelling on the banks of the Fraser—must have borrowed that practice from the Shushwap, who, from time immemorial, interred their dead and—occasionally at least—washed their bones.

#### CARRIER MYTHOLOGY MOSTLY EXOTIC.

But what about Carrier mythology ? I must confess that it cannot be described as wholly imported. The East has furnished its quota of legends as well as the West, though in unequal proportion. Such myths as our aborigines possess as Dénés are rather few compared with those which can be traced to western folk-lore. Of course, to present the reader with evidence fully corroborative of this assertion would lead us too far. We would have to reproduce very long stories such as they are narrated here, together with their Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida or Kwakwiutl versions. This may be done when time and better opportunities than are at present available will allow. Just now, though, I am acquainted with a number of Carrier legends, I hardly possess the full text of any of their equivalents among the Coast Indians ; yet, such general outlines of many and vague allusions to others as have come to my notice warrant me to state, as in the case of Carrier sociology, that any such myth as is unknown among the eastern Dénés, but obtain among both the Carriers and their western neighbours, has been borrowed from the latter. The reason for this is obvious, and this is a natural corollary to what has been said about the Carrier social institutions.

Among imported or extraneous myths, I will mention that concerning the state of

<sup>1</sup> Sixth Report, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Sácho thamasokoz* as he said. That this is not an isolated case is shown by that Indian's remark in answer to words expressive of my surprise at his taking such liberties with human bones :—*Hwèni Takpej l'etali, ndel'et'en*, " we Indians act in that way," thereby hinting at a well-recognized custom as his excuse for his conduct in the case.

<sup>3</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjé*, p. xxv.



the soul after death, published three years ago in "The Western Dénés."<sup>1</sup> It cannot be doubted that our Indians owe it to the Tlingit through the Tsimshians. Readers of a comparative turn of mind will not fail to remark that the peculiar belief, according to which yawning is an infallible means of attracting the departed soul's attention, deducible from that story, is also shared by the Tlingit, as evidenced by a myth of analogous character related by Dr. Boas.<sup>2</sup> According to that writer, a resuscitated shaman thus describes his experiences in the land of the shades :

"I resolved to go into the land of the souls. Soon I arrived at a fork in the road. A much-trodden road led one way, while the other seemed to have been seldom used. I followed the former. \* \* \* At last I arrived at a steep rock, the end of the world. At the foot of the rock a river flowed sluggishly. On the other side I saw a village and recognized many of its inhabitants. \* \* \* I cried : 'Oh, come, have pity on me! Take me over to you!' But they continued to wander about as though they did not hear me. I was overcome by weariness and lay down. \* \* \* I stretched my limbs and yawned. Then the people in the village cried : 'Somebody is coming! Let us go and take him across the river!'"

In the Carrier narrative the shaman is replaced by two young men lost in the woods. Here are the corresponding parts of the legend as told by our Indians :

"Out of curiosity they crawled in [a hollow tree lying on the ground] to see where it led. \* \* \* After some hard creeping on all fours through a dark subterranean passage \* \* \* the road widened and darkness ceased. Then they suddenly found themselves to be on the top of a hill commanding the view of a broad river, on the other side of which stood a village. This consisted of innumerable board houses, some of which were black, others red. It was the abode of the shades who were enjoying themselves on the lawn. \* \* \* At this sight one of the young men ran away and hid himself in the bush. As for his cousin, \* \* \* perceiving several black and red canoes hauled up on the other side of the river, he hallooed for somebody to come and take him across ; but the tumult was such that they did not hear him. At last, after repeated efforts to attract attention, having inadvertently yawned, one of them heard the movement of his jaws. Having apprised his fellow-spirits of the fact, some of them, at length, came across to fetch him."<sup>3</sup>

To such as might be tempted to suppose that the original of this story came from inland, I would say that this cannot be the case, for three excellent reasons : First, because, to the best of my knowledge<sup>4</sup> this legend has no counterpart in the mythology of the eastern or main portion of the Déné nation. Secondly, because a significant point of the Carrier account is the mention of *board* houses which, though common all along the coast, were unknown here, the material of which they were generally formed, split cedar, being wanting all over the Carriers' territory. Lastly, only a few of the subdivisions of the Carrier tribe are acquainted with this story, and these profess to have received it from

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings Can. Inst., October, 1889, pp. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, 1889, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> I have not seen Petitot's latest collection of Déné legends, but am well acquainted with three other works or papers of identical nature by that author, which could not but include this important myth, if it had course among the Eastern Dénés.

Tsèchah, the village where the large inter-tribal fairs already mentioned were held. It might also be noted that I did not see Dr. Boas's account of it until long after my own paper had been published.

While reviewing a paper published in Berlin (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1888), by Dr. Boas, A. S. Gatschet quotes<sup>1</sup> a Tsimshian myth, of which I regret not having seen the text. Its title, "The Abandoned Man," is suggestive to me, because our Indians possess a tale for which no better heading could be devised.

Of course, in a question of comparative mythology, perfect identity of narratives ought not to be sought. Native imagination is bound to have its play, and the peculiar psychological tendencies of the narrator or of the tribe to which he belongs will also generally influence the structure and wording of a myth, and sometimes even completely divert it from its original simplicity. Local colouring should also be expected as a matter of course, since it is well known that Indian legends relate happenings which are, as a rule, supposed to have taken place in the narrator's country. However, the main drift of them makes generally their identity unmistakable. It should also be added that several Carrier legends have the sea-coast for the scene of their heroes' adventures.

It happens, also, not infrequently, that a Tsimshian or Haida myth has been mixed up with, or added to, a purely Déné legend; but, even in such a case, the resemblance between the original and the main points of the complex story is, as a rule, too great to escape detection.

Take, for instance, the creation myth. Whether the creating power be called *ǵstas* by the Carriers, *Yʷt* by the Tlingit, *Ni-kil-stlas* by the Haida, or *Kaneakeluh* by the Kwakw'w'utl, though its role is, in this connection, more restricted in the Carrier mythology, and, in spite of the unavoidable local colouring, it remains perfectly clear that the hero of the various narratives is one and the same personage acting in a similar capacity. This national legend, which is common to all the Coast tribes, is unknown among the Tsé'k'enne and all such Dénés as have had no tribal intercourse with the Tlingit, Tsimshian or Kwakw'w'utl. Therefore, it could not have originated among the inland tribes, as Dr. Dawson was inclined to suppose. According to Petitot, by some Eastern Déné tribes, the creation of the universe was believed to have resulted from the Thunder Bird touching with its wing the open sea, from which the earth is said to have emerged, while, according to others, the creation was due to certain genii, servants of a Superior Being, who created all things by the spreading of a sort of magic veil over the bare earth.<sup>2</sup>

What is said of the marvellous and somewhat burlesque personage, *ǵstas*, would fill a good-sized volume. It is, therefore, impracticable to attempt here even an abridged relation of his many adventures. Suffice it to say that what I have read of his doubles among the Coast Indians is the exact counterpart of what is related of him here. Where his role has suffered the greatest alteration is, I think, in connection with the creation, or rather distribution of light, fire and water. In the Carrier myth, it is only with regard to the last-named element that *ǵstas* comes in for his share of the marvellous. As Dr. Dawson, in his essay on the Haida,<sup>3</sup> has reproduced from those aborigines that

<sup>1</sup>The American Antiquarian, Nov., 1889, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup>Monographie des Déné Dindjé, pp. xxiv, xxvi.

<sup>3</sup>Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Geol. Surv. Can., 1878-79.

important portion of the international legend, it occurs to me that it may not be amiss to give, by way of conclusion to this paper and as an incentive to the comparison of the two theogonies, the version of it which obtains among our Carriers.

### CREATION MYTHS.

**Creation of Light.**—A long time ago darkness reigned all over the earth, except in the lodge of an old man—a *Aoneza*, or noble,—who alone possessed light, fire and water. Therefore, men were very miserable and kept continually sighing after light. Repeatedly they entreated the old man to share it with them, but he would not hearken to their prayers. Finally, they agreed to get possession of it by force. With this object in view they went, with all the animals, into the old man's lodge, and started a song to wrest light from him by dint of persisting in noise<sup>1</sup> and singing. Each one of the crowd had his own particular song, and the young fox (*Khaih-pa-tso*, "he cries for daylight,")<sup>2</sup> kept repeating in time *khaih, khaih, khaih*, expecting to win thereby *yakhkhaih*, or daylight. But the old man was inflexible. However, the assembly named light so often and so persistently that after awhile it began to slowly steal up the heavens, even as it now does every morning. The old man perceived it, and excitedly shouted: "*Ləyul !.....* let there not be....."<sup>3</sup> Immediately the light receded below the edge of the sky.

Yet the young fox would not tire of repeating *khaih, khaih, khaih*, and both men and animals vied with one another in turbulent singing, hoping thereby to weary the old man into granting them light. Again the horizon began to be illuminated by a growing light. It was already high up the heavens, when the old man, perceiving it, got confused in his mind, and, without taking time to reflect, hurriedly exclaimed by mistake: "*Yukhkal !* let there be light!" Immediately there was light, and ever since men have retained possession of it.

**Creation of Fire.**—Hitherto they had no fire, and all were benumbed with cold, except the same old man who had fire in his lodge which he jealously guarded. As he would not give them the least part of it, they resolved upon getting it by stealth. Therefore, they engaged the services of a yearling caribou and of a muskrat. Having made for the former a ceremonial head-dress of resinous pine shavings, which was attached to his growing horns, and presented the latter with a ceremonial apron consisting of a marmot skin, they entered the old man's lodge, singing.<sup>4</sup> The caribou and the muskrat commenced their dance, stationing themselves at opposite extremities of the fireplace, over which the old man was keeping close watch. The song of the muskrat consisted in the repetition of the word *O ! shotte !*<sup>5</sup> wherewith some of us still greet him.

In the course of the dance, by jerking its head to the right and left as we used to do in dancing, the young caribou managed to ignite the inflammable material of which his

<sup>1</sup> It should not be forgotten that Indians invariably accompany their singing by striking the time on a drum, or kettle, or a board.

<sup>2</sup> By allusion to his matutinal barking.

<sup>3</sup> For "*yukhkal !*" The omission of the desiner *se*, which contains the root for light, is intended to express the old man's fear of even naming it.

<sup>4</sup> These particulars refer to a special ceremonial dance described in "The Western Dénés." *Proc. Can. Inst.*, 1889, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>5</sup> Unintelligible to the Carriers—an additional evidence of the extraneousness of the myth.

head-dress was constructed, but the old man immediately extinguished it with his hands.

After a little while, amidst the singing of the whole assembly of men who accompanied the dance, the caribou again managed to ignite its head-dress to such an extent that the old man had much trouble in extinguishing it.

Meanwhile, the wily muskrat, who had beforehand made all necessary preparations by burrowing through the earth, and who was watching his opportunity, furtively took a piece of fire while the old man's attention was taken up with the fruitless attempts of the caribou, and disappeared in the ground. A short time after somebody discerned a huge column of smoke rising from a mountain towering at the horizon. Soon smoke was followed by immense tongues of flames, and thus men knew that the muskrat had succeeded in getting for them the long-coveted fire.

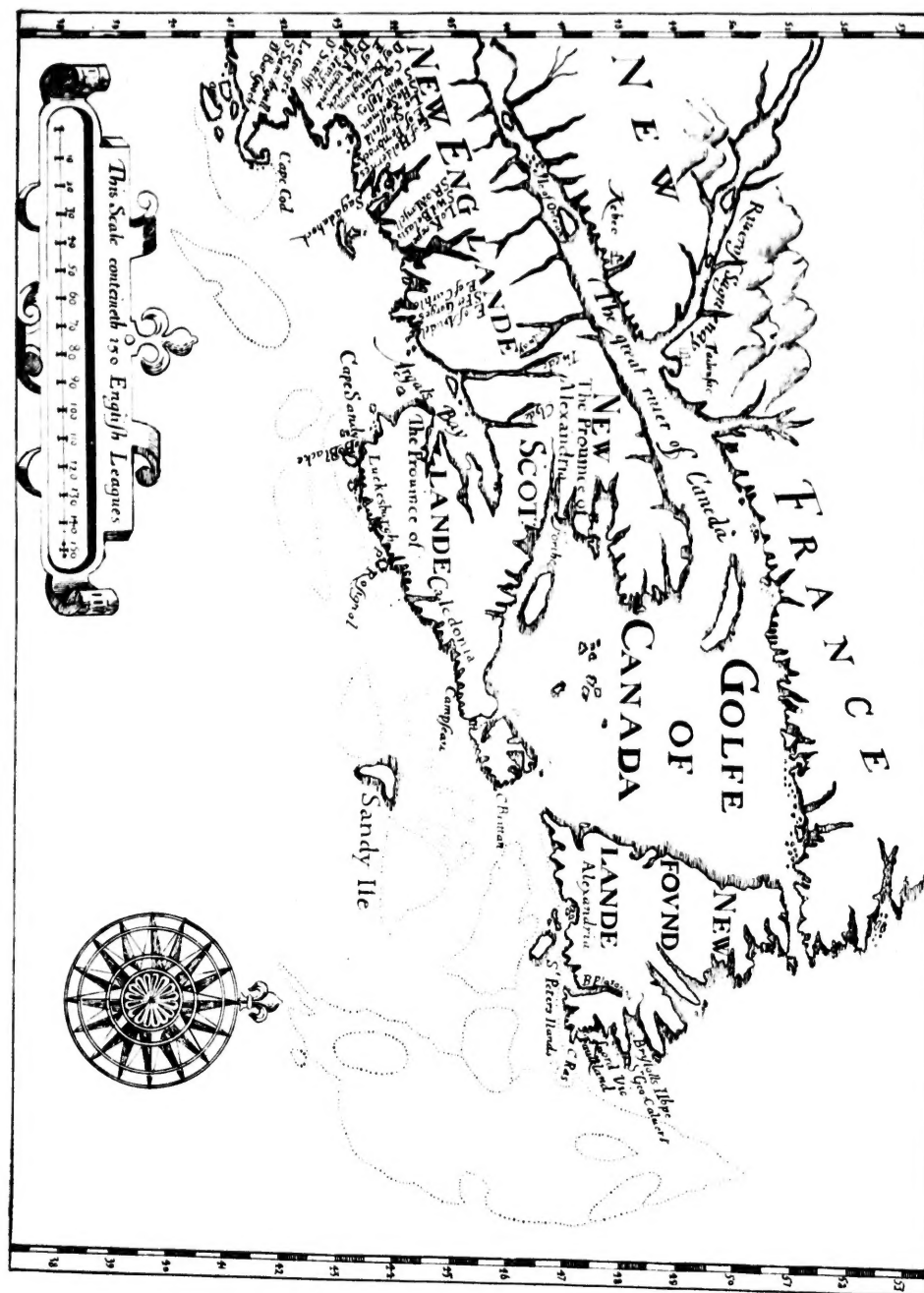
Creation of Water.—However, men had as yet no water, and they were thirsty. As they could not obtain any from the only old man who enjoyed its possession, ḡstas, who was very cunning, resolved upon a trick to get it for them. This same old notable had a daughter, a virgin. One day, as she was bending to drink from the water barrel,<sup>1</sup> which was always kept in a corner of the lodge, she perceived a spruce frond floating therein. In order to avoid swallowing which, she moved it aside; but as often as she did so it returned to the same place on the water. Getting wearied of her unavailing attempts to avoid it, she swallowed it, soon after which she became pregnant. In the course of time she gave birth to a son, who was no other than the wily ḡstas, who had for the purpose transformed himself into a spruce frond.

He had no sooner been born than he began to grow up at a prodigious rate. His great pastime was to amuse himself with the barrel containing the water, which he was constantly rolling in the direction of the doorway. His mother would then carefully take it back to its original place in the lodge. When the boy commenced to walk he would even roll it out some little distance from the door; but his mother as often put it back in its place. At last, having grown up to be a young man, he one day dashed away with it to distribute its contents to his fellow-men. With his index finger ḡstas sprinkled water where we now see rivers; lakes and the sea resulted from his spilling out with his hand larger quantities of the liquid; and when he had well-nigh done with his distribution, he threw away, by a rapid movement of his arm, what remained in the barrel, thereby producing what we now call Neto pənṛən,<sup>2</sup> which circumstance accounts for the great length of that lake. Thus it is that ḡstas gave us water.

Should it be necessary to point out the extraneousness especially of this latter part of the myth and thereby of its hero, ḡstas, I would just add that: 1. The mention therein of a wooden water box or jug (modernized into a barrel) can have originated only where such vessels were manufactured, and that was among the Coast Indians; and, 2. The very reference to Neto pənṛən, or French Lake, is to me unmistakable evidence that the story came to the Carriers proper through the Hwotso'tin, the Kitikson's immediate neighbours. That lake is one of the Hwotso'tin's favourite hunting resorts, and, among the other subdivisions of the tribe, there is not, I dare say, one out of fifty Indians who ever as much as saw it, let alone obtained an exact idea of its dimensions.

<sup>1</sup> This word will, no doubt, sound as somewhat modern, but I can find no fit substitute for it since the Indians insist that ḡstas was in the habit of *rolling* the vessel thereby designated. It is called *thá-changṛé* (etymology: water-wood [or wooden]-pack), whereby are also denominated the square wooden boxes imported from amongst the Coast tribes, but which obviously cannot be *rolled*.

<sup>2</sup> Français, or French Lake. See the map.



To illustrate Rev. George Patterson's Paper.